

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSY-02 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W  
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R 310223Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL SAPPORO  
TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 436  
AMCONSUL FUKUOKA  
AMCONSUL NAHA  
AMCONSUL OSAKA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: ENTRY OF NEW LIBERAL CLUB CANDIDATE CONFUSES UPPER HOUSE  
ELECTION PROSPECTS IN HOKKAIDO

1. SUMMARY: NEW LIBERAL CLUB HAS ENDORSED HOKKAIDO LOCAL  
CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATE FOR COMING UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. MOVE HAS  
STIMULATED RENEWED  
ACTIVITY ON PART OF LOCAL NEW LIBERAL CLUB SUPPORTERS AND  
CREATED CONFUSION IN POLITICAL PARTIES REGARDING ELECTION  
PROSPECTS. IT ALSO PROVIDES SOME EVIDENCE OF NEW LIBERAL CLUB  
STRENGTH IN OUTLYING AREAS AND UNDERSCORES FACT THAT GROUP'S  
ELECTORAL EFFORTS ARE CREATING ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR ALREADY  
BELEAGUERED LDP. END SUMMARY

2. ON MARCH 19, YOHEI KONO AND PROFESSOR YOSHINORI BANDO HELD  
SAPPORO PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THAT BANDO WOULD BE NEW  
LIBERAL CLUB CANDIDATE (HOKKAIDO LOCAL CONSTITUENCY) IN COMING  
UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. FACULTY MEMBER AT HOKKAIDO TEACHERS COLLEGE  
IN HAKODATE, 49 YEAR OLD BANDO HAS NO POLITICAL EXPERIENCE BUT  
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HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY WELL-KNOWN BECAUSE OF FREQUENT LOCAL  
TELEVISION APPEARANCES. PURVEYOR OF POP PSYCHOLOGY (MOTHER AND  
CHILD RELATIONS, ETC.), HE IS ESPECIALLY POPULAR WITH WOMEN'S  
GROUPS WHICH VIEW HIS COMMON PLACE OBSERVATIONS AS PROFOUND AND  
FIND HIS HAKODATE DIALECT HUMOR AMUSING. IN SHORT, ANOTHER  
"TALENT" CANDIDATE.

3. BANDO CANDIDACY HAS PRODUCED RENEWED ACTIVITY ON PART OF HOKKAIDO NEW LIBERAL CLUB. THAT BODY, FORMALLY INAUGURATED LAST OCTOBER AFTER ROUND OF PRELIMINARY MEETINGS, IS NOT YET OFFICIALLY AFFILIATED WITH KONO'S GROUP IN TOKYO. BUILT AROUND SMALL NUCLEUS OF YOUNGER CITY ASSEMBLYMEN, BUSINESSMEN, JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERS, AND SOME LDP DEFECTORS, HOKKAIDO CLUB ESTABLISHED CHAPTERS IN SEVERAL CITIES AND DECLARED GOAL OF BECOMING PREFECTURAL BRANCH OF NEW LIBERAL CLUB ONCE THAT GROUP BECAME

POLITICAL PARTY. IT ALSO BACKED TWO OF ITS OWN CANDIDATES IN DECEMBER GENERAL ELECTION. NEITHER, HOWEVER, WAS ENDORSED BY KONO, AND BOTH LOST BY LARGE MARGINS. HOKKAIDO CLUB IS NOW MOVING FORWARD WITH PREPARATIONS TO SUPPORT PROFESSOR BANDO'S CAMPAIGN AND THAT OF NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATE TAKAO SATO. IT IS ALSO PREPARING WITH KONO'S BLESSING, TO TRANSFORM ITSELF INTO NEW LIBERAL CLUB, HOKKAIDO FEDERATION.

4. BANDO CANDIDACY HAS ALSO CREATED CONSTERNATION IN LOCAL LDP CAMP AND TREPIDATION ON PART OF JSP (WHICH IS ALSO TRYING TO SORT OUT IMPLICATIONS OF EDA CANDIDACY). IT HAS, AT SAME TIME, GIVEN SOME ENCOURAGEMENT TO KOMEITO AND JCP. UNTIL WEEK AGO, GENERAL BELIEF WAS THAT LDP WOULD ELECT ITS TWO CANDIDATES AND JSP ITS TWO CANDIDATES TO FOUR LOCAL CONSTITUENCY SEATS IN UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. SINGLE KOMEITO AND JCP CONTENDERS WERE CONSIDERED UNABLE TO WIN.

5. NOW, WITH VOTES SPLIT SEVEN WAYS, OUTCOME IS MORE IN DOUBT. LDP FEARS BANDO COULD DRAW SUFFICIENT CONSERVATIVE AND "FLOATING" BALLOTS TO BRING ABOUT DEFEAT OF ONE OR BOTH OF ITS MEN AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNEASILY RECALLS 1974 RUN BY MAVERICK LDP COMPETITOR WHO CAUSED DIVISION OF CONSERVATIVES' VOTES IN SUCH WAY THAT THEY ALL LOST. TO LESSER DEGREE JSP FEARS THAT SHIFT TO BANDO OCCASIONED BY HIS APPEAL TO TEACHERS AND WOMEN, COMBINED WITH SLIPPAGE IN VOTES FROM EDA SUPPORTERS, COULD ALSO PLACE ITS CANDIDATES IN HAZARD. CONVERSELY, WITH "WIN LINE" LOWERED BY SEVEN MAN FIELD, KOMEITO AND JCP EACH FEEL THEIR VOTING BLOCKS MIGHT NOW BE LARGE ENOUGH TO PLACE MAN AMONG TOP FOUR FINISHERS. NO ONE IS YET SAYING THAT BANDO HIMSELF CAN WIN, ALTHOUGH THERE IS SPECULATION ABOUT THAT TOO, BUT HIS CANDIDACY HAS COMPLETELY CONFUSED WHAT UNTIL FEW DAYS AGO WAS REASONABLY CLEAR PICTURE OF LIKELY OUTCOME IN HOKKAIDO LOCAL CONSTITUENCY.

6. COMMENT: OUTCOME OF HOKKAIDO LOCAL CONSTITUENCY RACE, OF COURSE, INFLUENCES OVERALL HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS ELECTION RESULT IN ONLY SMALL WAY. IN LIGHT OF NARROW CONSERVATIVE-OPPOSITION SPLIT IN UPPER HOUSE AND CONSEQUENT CHALLENGE TO LDP MAJORITY, HOWEVER, IT GAINS IN SIGNIFICANCE, ESPECIALLY SINCE LDP HAS HOPED TO GAIN TWO SEATS HERE THAT IT MISSED IN 1974. BEYOND

THAT, RECENT HOKKAIDO DEVELOPMENTS PROVIDE SOME EVIDENCE THAT  
NEW LIBERAL CLUB IS STILL GAINING STRENGTH IN OUTLYING AREAS OF  
JAPAN, DESPITE SCATTERED PRESS CRITICISMS THAT ITS ADHERENTS  
TEND TO BE "OPPORTUNISTS" AND ITS SUPPORT "FADDISH." FINALLY,  
ALTHOUGH UNAWARE OF SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES IN OTHER PREFECTURES,  
WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT, WIN OR LOSE, NEW LIBERAL CLUB CANDIDATES  
WILL DO SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO LDP AND COULD BE PROXIMATE CAUSE  
SHOULD LDP BE DEFEATED IN JULY ELECTION.

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